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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FOREIGN MAIL SERVICE.

LETTER

FROM

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

TRANSMITTING,]

Pursuant to the resolution of the House of the 17th instant, a report of such measures as are rendered necessary by the present state of our foreign mail service.

JANUARY 26, 1848.

Read, and referred to the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *January 20, 1848.*

SIR: In answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 17th instant, I have the honor to report that the measures which the present state of our foreign mail service renders necessary are—

1. The establishment of American packet postage, which shall be chargeable as well upon letters and newspapers sent or brought by the packet boats, or public vessels, of other governments as our own.

2. The enlargement of the provisions of the 17th section of the Post Office act of 1825, so as to require all packet boats, or other ships, to deliver into the post office all letters and newspapers to be landed on our shores, wherever addressed.

3. To prevent any packet boat, or other vessel, from making clearance or departing from port having on board any letters for transmission abroad, other than those received through the American post office, and to require all outward bound packet boats, or other vessels, to convey letters and newspapers delivered to them through the American post office.

4. To allow the Postmaster General to release from the packet postage the letters and newspapers brought by the packet boats, or public vessels, of those governments that do not subject the mails of our packet boats, or public vessels, to a packet postage or other equivalent charge.

The only packet postage allowed by acts of Congress is applicable exclusively to the mails conveyed by the ships of the Bremen line. It is 24 cents—of the same amount as the English packet postage. Whilst I would fix our packet postage chargeable upon letters between the United States and any port on the Eastern continent, or the islands thereof, at the same amount, I would advise that authority be given to the Postmaster General to reduce said rate to 20 cents with those countries that would place their postage at a like amount, and would make this postage cover the inland as well as the sea conveyance; that is, that there shall be no super-addition of inland postage. I would embrace the occasion to fix packet postage to and from all ports on the Western continent, or the islands thereof, at 20 cents, excepting Mexico, not on the Pacific coast, also excepting Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; and in packet mails between those points and the United States at 10 cents. Postage, by private ships, should, in my judgment, be at 10 cents the single letter; and newspaper postage, by packet across the Atlantic, be fixed at the English rate of 4 cents, without any addition of inland postage, subject to be reduced by the Postmaster General with those countries that will make like reduction of their newspaper packet postage.

The postage by ship from one port to another in the United States, inquired of by the resolution, should be at the regular inland rates, which are now 5 or 10 cents, according to the distance, and would be 5 cents if that shall be established as the uniform inland postage.

I beg leave to refer to my report accompanying the President's annual message, for the reasons showing the necessity of establishing the above legal provisions. And I take occasion to call attention to the annexed report of the First Assistant Postmaster General, whom I sent to Europe, last summer, as the special agent of this department upon the subject of our foreign mails, for a full relation of all the important circumstances connected therewith.

I send the accompanying exhibits, marked B, C, D, to show the attempts made upon the jurisdiction and sovereignty of this government over the mail service in its territory, by the subjects of another government. It justifies, in my opinion, a provision giving more power to the executive officers to detect and bring to punishment such offences.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
C. JOHNSON,
Postmaster General.

Hon. R. C. WINTHROP,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

A.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
Contract Office, January 15, 1848.

SIR: On the 1st June last, I left the United States, in the steamship Washington, upon a foreign agency, with which I was charged by your instructions of the 26th of May. On arriving at Southampton, in England, on the 15th June, I was shown an order of the British Post Office Department, issued on the 9th of that month, imposing the British packet postage of one shilling sterling for each letter of a half ounce, and two pence for each newspaper, brought in the United States mails by the Washington. This was made chargeable as well upon those destined for France as those deliverable in the United Kingdom; and the postmaster of Southampton was required to forward to London all the mailbags left by the Washington, without being opened. The effect of this order was to subject all the letters and newspapers to double postage; and those addressed to France to additional delay, by being taken out of the direct course to their places of destination.

This proceeding was wholly unexpected. It was known that letters sent by ship to England were liable to be charged with a postage of eight pence, the same as letters brought to the United States were liable to be charged six cents; but the United States ship postage had been relinquished in respect to the British and Canada mails brought by the Cunard steamers to Boston, and transported thence to St. Johns, and in all other cases was abated to two cents where the letter was delivered elsewhere than at the port of arrival. The most friendly disposition, growing out of the British and Canada mail arrangement which was made in 1844, had been expressed; and an informal correspondence had been carried on through the British minister in respect to the facilities to be given to our mails in England, to adjust what you had decided to send out an agent, and that intention had been communicated by the British minister to his government. These circumstances encouraged the expectation that the 8d. ship charge might be waived, and that no other postage would be imposed upon the mails sent by the Washington than the port or inland rate, instead of according to our mails this justly expected reciprocity, or of even being content with the ordinary ship charge, wholly defrayed by another government, special proceedings were taken upon this occasion for the purpose of increasing the postage, and the highest rate under their law was imposed. The same order required a prepayment of the full packet rate of postage to the English post office, on all letters and newspapers sent to the United States by the ship Washington.

Being required by your instructions to proceed with the Washington to Bremen, I addressed a full communication upon this subject to his excellency George Bancroft, our minister at London. His despatches to the Secretary of State will show the proceedings

taken by him to effect a rescission of the order of the 9th of June. They disclose the avowal that this postage was imposed as a discriminating one to protect the Cunard steamship mail line; that is, to induce the employment of that line for the transportation of letters, in preference to the American mail line, by enhancing the cost of conveyance in the latter.

I had been in Germany but ten days when I received a request from Mr. Bancroft to repair to London, written in the expectation of an offer of terms from the British government for a postal arrangement. I accordingly joined him; but this expectation was not then realized. After a delay in London of a month, I returned to the continent. Having drawn the business of my agency to a close in Germany, I again joined Mr. Bancroft in London about the 1st of October. At this time he received the British project for a postal convention between the two countries. Several of the terms were deemed objectionable, and a counter proposition on our part was submitted by Mr. Bancroft. At the same time the rescission of the order, imposing the British postage on the American mails, was again formally applied for, and its withdrawal insisted upon at least pending the negotiations; but it was refused in any other mode than by the adoption of a convention. A formal protest against the order of the 9th June was then addressed by our minister to the secretary for foreign affairs. Interviews were appointed and held at the office of the chancellor of the exchequer, and also with the postmaster general, the Marquis of Clanricarde, and discussions had on the points of difference between the British and American propositions for postal arrangements. These it would not be proper to set forth in this report, nor the terms themselves, so long as the negotiation is pending. They were made under an avowal of principles of perfect reciprocity; and we felt encouraged confidently to expect their full assent to all our modifications of justness excepting one, looking, in respect to that, for some advantage upon which compromise; but their final restatement of the terms urgent request they would negotiate a postal convention, made at the departure for the United States, contains not only the objectionable proposition alluded to, but the others likewise.

However anxious to make back to the United States the adjustment of a difficulty which had so unexpectedly arisen; however ambitious to accomplish, within the little time allotted me abroad, arrangements with the British post office, as well as with the German authorities, I could not consent to obtain this gratification by any sacrifice whatever of our just and equal claims. Neither could I advise a concession to the British post office of any advantage in the agreement, for the purpose of getting rid of the greater disadvantages to which we were subjected by the order of the 9th June. That would have been, to the extent of the advantage yielded, a submission to a wrong alike forbidden by a sense of right and of honor. That order is a manifest act of aggression on a rightful measure of our government. As such, it is to be resisted. For it cannot be presumed that this hostile demonstration is to drive our

government from its policy of encouraging the establishment of American ocean steamers, and employing them as means of communication with other ports of the world. And yet it is obvious that we must do so, under the effect of the British order of the 9th June, at great pecuniary loss. Mails will not be sent by our steamers if they are to be taxed twice as much as when conveyed by the English lines. Retaliation is, therefore, unavoidable. If we levy the same contribution on the British mails which they exact from ours, we shall place the international mail service of the two countries on an equal footing, and obtain out of the mail service of the British steamers a redress equal, at least, to the exactions forced from our own.

The inequality under which our mails are placed, by the order of the 9th June, is manifesting its effects upon our revenue from this mail line in a way that cannot be mistaken. The postage on mails sent to Great Britain by the second trip of the Washington were 19 per cent. less than the amount by the first trip; and by the third trip the postage was 41 per cent. less.

The following legal provisions would place our international mails upon an equal footing with those of Great Britain:

1st. To impose a uniform rate of 24 cents American postage on all single letters received at our ports, or sent from them by any packet-boat whether belonging to or employed by our own government, or that of any other country.

2d. To authorize the Postmaster General to waive such packet-postage charge on letters brought or sent in the packets of other governments that released the letters sent or brought by the packets of the United States government from packet postage, or other equivalent charge; and to levy on such letters only the usual port or inland postage, as the case might require.

3d. To authorize the Postmaster General to reduce such uniform rate of 24 cents to 20 cents on all letters transmitted by American packets between our country and those foreign countries whose governments maintain packet lines with ours, and establish a like rate on letters conveyed by those lines.

4th. To authorize the Postmaster General to increase said packet rate corresponding with any increase in the foreign packet rate that may be ordered by any other government.

5th. To enlarge the operations of the 17th section of the act of 1825, requiring letters to be delivered into the post office from each packet or ship, before making entry, so as to embrace all letters brought, whether addressed "to persons in the United States and its territories," or elsewhere.

6th. To prohibit the receiving on board of a packet, to convey abroad, any letters except those coming through the post office.

Intimately connected with the adjustment of the packet service, which is the conveyance of foreign mails by government vessels—that is, vessels belonging to government for that purpose, or employed by government under contract to carry mails—is that of mail transportation by private ships. In England, the packet rate of postage is the same as in the United States—1 shilling sterling,

equal to 24 cents; their ship rate is 8 pence, equal to 16 cents; whilst our ship rate is but 6 cents. The packet rate is, however, higher in the United States than in England, because here inland postage is to be added, whilst in England the 24 cents pay the entire postage from the place of mailing, or to the place of destination, no matter how far inland that may be. But our ship rate is disproportionately low; and, besides, we impose that rate only on letters received. I propose that, in respect to ship, as well as to packet conveyance, we establish a uniform rate—one that will pay postage from the place whence mailed, or to the place where delivered, wherever situate in the United States. This mode of assessing postage is so much more just to the public, and so much more convenient to the department, that the first opportunity presented for adopting it, should, in my judgment, be embraced. I therefore propose the following further provisions:

7th. To establish a uniform ship postage, between any place in the United States and any foreign port, of 10 cents.

8th. To authorize the Postmaster General to require outward bound ships to take and convey mails, and duly deliver them at their ports of arrival.

9th. To prohibit them from taking any letters other than those received through the post office.

The packet postage rate, above suggested, refers solely to our mail intercourse with the countries beyond the Atlantic. I beg leave to add, that whilst this matter is under consideration that uniform rates of postage be fixed.

10th. Between any port or place in the United States and any port on the western continent, excepting Mexico, Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, at 20 cents.

11th. Between any place in the United States and any port on the Pacific coast of Mexico, of the United States, of the British and the Russian possessions, at 20 cents.

12th. And, between any place in the United States and Canada, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, or in any place in Mexico, except on the Pacific coast, at 10 cents.

I have proposed the packet rates of postage to countries beyond the Atlantic at 24 cents, because that is the English packet rate; and it becomes necessary, in the present state of things, to retain a postage, in respect to that country, as high as that which she imposes. But where the postage policy of any foreign government, as, for instance, that of France, will admit of a reduction, then the packet rate should be brought down to 20 cents—15 cents of this will be for sea conveyance, and 5 cents for inland. And in case the German States will ameliorate their postages, and make more uniform rates than at present, I would reduce the packet charge on letters to and from that portion of Europe to a 20 cent rate also.

By placing our packet rates on letters brought and sent by foreign government ships, as well as our own, the department is enabled at once to countervail the discriminating policy now adopted by the British post office—whilst the authority to release the charge upon the letters conveyed by the public packets of those governments

that do not subject our public packets to any such burthen, enables us to deal with moderation and justice towards those who act in that spirit towards the United States.

An uniform postage for newspapers and other printed matter should be adopted, which postage should cover the whole charge from the place of mailing and to the place of destination in the United States, without any superadditions of inland postage. The English rate on newspapers to and from this country is equal to four cents; but it would be desirable to provide that the Postmaster General may reduce this rate with those countries that will make corresponding reductions in the foreign newspaper postage.

In the nature of things this postage must be payable in the United States. But it would eminently promote the convenience of all concerned, and greatly increase both friendly and business correspondence between different countries, if postal conventions could be entered into between them, establishing the following arrangements:

1. Optional payment—the privilege of paying at the place of mailing in one country the entire postage through to the place of delivery in the other—or of sending the letter through to its destination, the postage to be collected of the receiver.

2. A uniform international rate of postage that shall combine in one amount the charge for inland conveyance in the country sending, for the sea conveyance, and for the inland transportation in the country receiving and delivering the letter.

3. A mutual accountability between the governments that would secure to each all the inland postage it was entitled to, that the other had collected, and all the sea postage on the letters conveyed in its packets which had been paid in the other country.

In respect to our mail intercourse relations with Great Britain it is highly expedient to establish a *transit* rate of postage. Her mails are despatched to and from the chief portion of her possessions on this continent with the greatest expedition, by a conveyance across our territory. And, on the other hand, a large portion of our mails to and from the European nations and the East Indies and China, is transmitted across the Island of England and through channels of communication beyond, belonging to Great Britain. The lowest transit rate that she imposes is 5 pence, equal to 10 cents, that is, between England and France. Our conveyance of her Canada mails is over a distance equally as great, and by means of conveyance as expensive. As a proper adjustment of this matter, and as an arrangement preliminary to any successful negotiation on this point, I propose a uniform transit rate of 10 cents, American postage, on all single letters between any place in the United States and any place in the British possessions. This might also be extended to Mexico, excluding the places on the Pacific coast which are provided for in previous suggestions. A 10 cent transit charge is rather low in comparison with present rates of postage, but will stand in very just proportion with the contemplated uniform inland postage of 5 cents.

Agreeably to your instructions, I went to Paris, and had inter-

views with the Director General of the French Post Office, count de Jean, and the administrateur des postes of the Bureau of Foreign Correspondence, M. Dubost. They declared a willingness to enter upon arrangements but for the interference of the British order of the 9th June, which made it impossible to fix the postage for the French and American lines at the same amount, or to adjust mutual and reciprocal terms between the two countries. When any portion of the present American steam line shall run direct to Havre, the legislation of Congress will be needed to enable the American sea postage to be reduced to the same amount as the French packet postage, which is 20 cents, in case the packet postage is to be retained at a separate amount from the inland. And the French authorities will make their inland charge, I doubt not, conform to ours. Though the better course would be, as heretofore recommended, to make one uniform rate for both countries, embracing both the sea and inland postage. This it would be competent for a convention between the two governments to arrange; and it is by a convention that both England and France contemplate to adjust these international matters, whenever they shall conclude to take them up for that purpose. There is but one point with France upon which I can apprehend any disagreement. Her limit of weight for a single letter is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an ounce, whilst ours is $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce. In accounting by weight, which is the mode insisted upon both by her and England, we should have to pay to her 4 postages in the ounce, whilst we should receive from her but 2 postages; whereas, practically, the letters would be written in reference to the French standard of $\frac{1}{4}$ of an ounce to the single letter, and France would actually collect 4 American postages to the ounce. This could be obviated by each government, accounting for the postages collected for the other, by the actual number of letters. More inconvenience would result from this mode, but manifest injustice would be avoided.

When I arrived at Bremen, in June last, I found a ready and willing consideration extended at once to the subject of our international mail intercourse with Germany, and to all suggestions for its improvement. Besides the post office authorities of Bremen, I met there representatives from the post offices of Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, and Hamburgh; and a communication from the Directeur General of the Thurn and Taxis posts at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, was brought to me by Charles Graebe, esq., an American consul, and a zealous and devoted friend of American interests. The postal systems of Germany are of a very complicated organization. The Prince of Thurn and Taxis (resident in Ratisbon, in the Kingdom of Bavaria) holds, by ancient feudatory grant, revived at the Congress of Vienna, the exclusive right of mail conveyance in seventeen states of the German confederation; and, in most of the remaining states, a right concurrent with the separate right of the local governments. This circumstance I found, after my first visit to Bremen, and after I had had an interview at Frankfort with the Directeur General of the Thurn and Taxis posts, embarrassed my operations with difficulties somewhat peculiar. The general and

the local authorities entertained conflicting views. Deeming it unwise to excite jealousies, and not having the time to follow out the negotiations with each, I judged it best to rely upon the agency of the government of Bremen, to effect the desired results of uniform and reduced postages in Germany upon the American mails. I then adjusted with the post office authority of that government, all needful arrangements. 1st. For sending mail matter through from any place in the United States to any place in Germany, and also, to several of the adjoining nations, north and east of it; and likewise, from thence to any place in the United States, under a charge of postage that should cover the whole distance. 2d. For allowing the writer to pay the postage to the place of destination in advance, or leave it to be paid by the receiver of the letter on delivery, or to pay part of the postage on either side as far as Bremen, leaving the residue to be paid by the receiver on delivery. 3d. For the keeping the accounts by Bremen with the several European governments on the one side, and with the United States on the other, and accounting and paying over to the United States all postage due to it, collected in Germany, or the countries beyond; and accounting to and paying over to the several German governments, and those of the countries beyond, the postage accruing to them respectively from the American mails collected in the United States.

The post office authority of the Hanseatic republic of Bremen is exercised by a committee of its senate, the principal member of which is the Hon. Arnold Duckwitz. With him my business was transacted and arrangements made. Through him the applications were presented to the different governments to reduce the postages and establish uniform rates on the American mails. The kingdom of Prussia, whose postages ranged from 6 cents to 19, fixed a single uniform rate at 12 cents, including the transit rate through Hanover. The kingdom of Hanover, whose postage was 7 cents, agreed to make a uniform charge of 6 cents on all American mails delivered in or sent from its territories. The duchy of Brunswick has adopted the same rate, in lieu of its former charge of 9 cents; and the kingdom of Saxony, whose rates ranged as high as 19 cents, has quite recently acceded to the Prussian postage of 12 cents—understood, of course, to cover the cost of transit through the intervening territories of Hanover, Brunswick, and Prussia. The postage charged by the duchy of Oldenburgh is 5 cents, and by the free town of Hamburg, 6 cents.

The foregoing may be considered as fully adjusted, and single postage allowed to the limit of a half ounce.

The arrangement of a uniform rate for the countries covered by the Thurn and Taxis posts, and for Austria, has been the subject of correspondence, but has not as yet been accomplished.

The Thurn and Taxis posts embrace the kingdom of Wurtemberg, with the principalities of Hohenzollern; the principalities of Hesse Hamburg, and Meissenheim, Lippe Detmold, Reuss, Schaumburgh Lippe, Schwartzburgh Rudolstadt, and Schwartzburgh Sonderhausen; the grand duchies of Hesse Cassel, Hesse Darmstadt, and Saxe

Weimar, Mecklenburgh Schwerin, and Mecklenburgh Strelitz; the duchies of Nassau, Saxe Altenburgh, Saxe Coburg Gotha, and Saxe Meinengen, and the free city of Frankfort. These countries lie, in part, on the Rhine, south of the Prussian possessions, also in detached States through the central part of Germany, and north of Prussia, beyond the Elbe. The postages from Bremen to the different points range from 10 to 21 cents. M. Doenburgh, the directeur general of those posts, agreed to a uniform rate of 12 cents (the single letter to extend to a half ounce) on American correspondence sent from his territories to Bremen, but could not restrict the charge to so low an amount on the correspondence received, as Bremen, in virtue of some arrangement with Hanover, sends those mails by the Hanover posts instead of his own, and he is obliged to account to that government for a transit charge thereon. It is confidently believed that this difficulty will, before long, be obviated.

My attention was early given to the subject of a new channel of conveyance to East India and China, by means of our steam line to Bremen and the line of railroad thence to the port of Triest, on the Adriatic, from which the Austrian government maintains a line of steam packets to Alexandria, in Egypt. This route presented, what in the course of the season would become, an uninterrupted channel of conveyance by steam, except a short portion of the distance between Vienna and Triest. From Alexandria to Cairo the conveyance is furnished by the Pacha of Egypt, and beyond, by the British government. I was aware that a conveyance by the English, Peninsular, and Oriental steam packets, likewise across France to Marseilles, and thence by French steamers to Alexandria, also existed; and that, by these, letters could be sent from England prepaid or unpaid. But I was desirous of ascertaining whether the like facilities could not be secured by the way of Germany and the Adriatic, and through privileges obtained by treaty or otherwise by the Austrian government. On this point a full communication was received from Baron Kubeck, the Austrian minister of finance. Without occupying this report with the minute information furnished, it is sufficient to say, that as yet the arrangements would require a separate payment of the Austrian inland and sea postage; also of the English postage accruing on the route east of Alexandria—so that the German route to India does not furnish to us the facilities desired. It is however hoped, that that government will see the importance to their own noble enterprizes of securing the right of sending mails through on the whole route, with the privilege of paying postage to destination, either in advance or on delivery. Our interest in the matter consists in this, that our arrangements through Bremen will enable such privilege to inure to the benefit of the American mails.

Of the inland postage of Austria, and other countries not yet enumerated, I will speak hereafter.

Whilst on the subject of reducing postage and adjusting uniform rates, I will state that the attention of the several German gov-

ernments was earnestly directed last summer to the propriety of general reforms in this and other particulars of their post office system. The result was that a postal congress was convened at Dresden, in Saxony, in October last. The Hon. A. Duckwitz became a member of that body. Anticipating that the American mail interests were liable to be affected by the action of the convention, I ventured upon the freedom, whilst at London, of addressing the following suggestions to Senator Duckwitz, under date of 16th October, 1847.

"Combining, as you do, with the character of representative of Bremen, that of an agent of the Post Office Department of the United States, you will doubtless improve this occasion to labor for the accomplishment of that which will redound so greatly to the advantage of both countries, the reduction of the German postage on the American correspondence, and the establishment of uniform rates.

"I will avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate what I have heretofore urged upon your attention. In the United States a single letter is conveyed in the mails any distance not exceeding 300 miles and delivered for 5 cents postage; and is conveyed any distance beyond 300 miles and delivered for 10 cents. The United States mail route from New York to Austin, the capital of the State of Texas, near which place is a large and increasing German settlement, is more than 2,300 miles in length. In view of this fact, it may well be claimed, under the principle of reciprocity, that, in Germany, the American letters should be conveyed and delivered, even at the remotest point, at a charge not exceeding 10 cents; for the longest route traversing it is not probably half as long as the one I have named in the United States. And it is not probable that any mail route in any one country in Germany exceeds the distance of 300 miles.

"Consideration, I admit, is due to the circumstance of there being so many separate governments in Germany, each of which is to have its distinct remuneration for the service it performs. Conceding to this circumstance its full weight, then I would say that a postage of 5 cents to the government which conveys and delivers the letter, and of 2 cents to the government that simply gives a transit without delivery, would make an ample remuneration. This conclusion is justified by the further consideration that no additional outlay is made for this correspondence—the mail lines being established and kept in operation without any reference to it.

"On this scale of postages, the Hanover rate would be 5 cents.

* * * * *

Brunswick would be the same; also, Oldenburg. The Prussian postage would consist of two transit rates rating from Bremen Haven, and one delivery rate amounting to 9 cents. The Saxony, the same; the Austrian, of 3 transit rates, and the 5 cents added, making 11 cents; Thurn and Taxis would be two or three transit rates, and its own charge of 5 cents; Bavaria, the same.

"If there are German States not embraced by the above enume-

ration of post departments, it can be readily seen what, according to the above scale, would be their postage from Bremen Haven by an allowance of 2 cents transit for each country through which the letter passes, and the addition of the final rate of 5 cents.

"Uniformity of regulation as to the weight which a single letter may extend, is important between countries that give to their international correspondence the advantage of optional payment of postage. You will, I presume, press upon the other German States the example of Prussia, Hanover, Oldenburgh, Brunswick, Ham-
burgh, and Bremen, in adopting the English scale of $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce to the single letter. This is observed in America, and prevails throughout the chief portions of the commercial world. It gives to correspondents no greater share of the use of the mails than a full ordinary despatch requires."

Senator Duckwitz replied to that part of my letter, under date of 26th November, 1847, as follows :

"Though as yet not much can be said regarding the alterations to be concluded, yet so much I may say, that we may have the hope to see postage reduced and put upon an uniformity all over Germany. The observations you had the kindness to give in your favor of the 16th October have been used ; and, however desirable it may be to see the principle expressed in execution, you must not overlook that the chief expenses for post matter do not exist in the transport of letters, but in the expenses of the administration. The consequence thereof is, that the postage in a country with a great population and many different administrations must be higher than in a country of proportionately less population and with a *single* administration. In this point exists a difference between the United States and Germany. You will receive further news regarding that Congress as soon as there comes forth a result; but so much you may be aware, that good will be done there, and that we have the best prospect for a correspondence, not to be compared with the trifling number we received hitherto, as soon as the steamers go at a certain day and as soon as the United States postage, steamer and inland, is placed at a reduced and single tax."

I will close the statement of my German mail arrangements by referring to the regulations which I had the honor, as your agent, to propose, and which have received the unqualified assent of the honorable Mr. Duckwitz excepting in one particular. On this excepted point he agreed to submit to your decision ; and, as you have so made it as to leave the regulations unchanged, they stand of course wholly agreed to and in full force.

A change of circumstances in our postal relations with Canada leaves so much of the regulations as refer to them inoperative ; and, where agreements have been since made, the rate of postage has been varied from the regulations as in the case of Saxony. So in respect to the Thurn and Taxis territories, the postage rate, supposed when the regulations were drawn to have been agreed to, remains unsettled.

I have prepared the following table to show the postages be-

tween the different points in the United States and the principal points in the different countries reached by mail through the channel of the American mail steamers and the Bremen Post Office. This table is more accurate, because made at a later date, than the list in the regulations:

TABLE OF RATES.

Destination:	Limit to which letters may be paid.	United States postage for single letter.			The foreign postage.	Limit of weight for single postage under the foreign charge.	Remarks.
		To and from New York.	Inland—300 miles.	Inland—over 300 miles.			
Bremen.....	These may be paid to destination, or sent unpaid thro', or paid to Bremen, leaving residue to be paid on delivery.	<i>Cents.</i> 24	<i>Cents.</i> 5	<i>Cents.</i> 10	<i>Cents.</i> ..	<i>Ounce.</i> $\frac{1}{2}$	These foreign rates are uniform & agreed upon.
Hamburgh.....		24	5	10	6	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Oldenburgh.....		24	5	10	5	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Hanover.....		24	5	10	6	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Brunswick.....		24	5	10	6	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Prussia.....		24	5	10	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Saxony.....	These may be paid to destination, or left unpaid, or paid to Bremen; but it is advised that the United States postage, and that only, be pre-paid.	24	5	10	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	Thurn and Taxis.
Lubec.....		24	5	10	9	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Gotha.....		24	5	10	13	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Vienna.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Prague.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Pressburgh.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Triest.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Austria generally.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Cassel.....		24	5	10	10	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Coburg.....		24	5	10	15	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Bavaria generally.....		24	5	10	22	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Frankfort-on-the-Main..		24	5	10	13	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Darmstadt generally...		24	5	10	15	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Baden generally.....		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Wurtemberg.....		24	5	10	21	$\frac{1}{4}$	

TABLE—Continued.

Destination.	Limit to which letters may be paid.	United States postage for single letter.			The foreign postage.	Limit of weight for single postage under the foreign charge.	Remarks.
		To and from New York.	Inland—300 miles.	Inland—over 300 miles.			
		Cents.	Cents.	Cents.	Cents.	Ounce.	
Altona	These should be pre-paid to Bremen, leaving the postage for the residue of the route to be paid at place of destination.	24	5	10	6	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Kiel		24	5	10	11	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Copenhagen and farthest part of Denmark....		24	5	10	22	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Stockholm and farthest part of Sweden.....		24	5	10	39	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Bergen, Christiana, and farthest part of Norway		24	5	10	28	$\frac{1}{2}$	
St. Petersburg		24	5	10	24	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Cronstadt		24	5	10	24	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Alexandria		24	5	10	37	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Cairo		24	5	10	37	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Greece		24	5	10	37	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Eastern towns of the Italian States		24	5	10	18	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Constantinople		24	5	10	37	$\frac{1}{4}$	
Basle and Switzerland generally		24	5	10	21	$\frac{1}{4}$	

NOTE.—In respect to newspapers and other printed matter, the American postage on which must in all cases be pre-paid, it is to be observed that they cannot pass through the foreign mails, as such, unless placed in narrow bands, (not wrappers, as with us,) not more than a third or a quarter as wide as the length of the package; and they must be printed in the language of the country from which they are sent, unless special exceptions are made by mutual agreement of the governments concerned, as is the case with Gallignani's Messenger and the Augsburg Gazette. Newspaper postage in Germany is generally the one-fourth of the letter rate.

The right of optional payment, that is, payment of postage here or in the foreign country, can be enjoyed in respect to all the places named in the foregoing table; but it is advised by the post department of Bremen, as a better policy, to adopt it only with those countries that have agreed to specific rates for the American correspondence, and to extend the privilege of optional payment as the other governments come into like agreements, which, it is believed, will in time embrace all.

Our postage is too complex; too contingent and uncertain in amount to be understood in the German post offices, and operates as a serious obstruction to correspondence. We should lose no time in adopting a uniform rate that will express in one sum the whole American charge, both for sea conveyance and inland.

Other omissions and irregularities must be corrected. More boats should be placed on the line; so infrequent a departure as once in two months will have little or no effect in diverting correspondence from other channels; and departures at different days from those previously advertised, as has been the case with the Washington, owing to peculiar circumstances, have left her only that correspondence to convey that was casual and collected chiefly within short distances from her port of sailing.

The German mails conveyed by the Washington, though slightly increasing with each trip, are far less than was anticipated; owing, doubtless, to the foregoing circumstances.

Your instructions made it in part my duty to examine into the operations of other post office systems abroad, to ascertain what improvements might be transferred to our own. When in London, especially upon my first visit, and my time could not be made available upon the business that called me there, I employed it chiefly in making these examinations. Every facility was granted me for that purpose. For this, I feel greatly indebted to the courtesy of Colonel Maberly, the able Secretary of the British post office. And, in making acknowledgments for the kindness shown me in giving information, I cannot refrain from naming another, little known from his official position, but of distinguished reputation as the successful projector of the penny postage reform, Rowland Hill. Their mode of mailing, bagging, forwarding, and delivering; their forms of post bills and of postmasters' accounts, and mode of rendering them; and their manner of contracting for mail conveyance, are entirely different from ours.

They have, what never belonged to our establishment, a registration of letters, (a fee being paid for that purpose,) the better to prove and trace them through the mails; and a money order office to supersede remittances of small sums through the mails, by providing for the receipt of deposits at one post office, and the payment of the amount at another, upon a commission allowed for that purpose; the operations of which, for the last year, extended to the aggregate amount of £14,115,153 sterling. I have not space at the close of this report to enter upon a description of the peculiar features of the British post administration; the great superiority of which renders it unnecessary to refer to others; nor to dis-

cuss the practicability and expediency of engrafting them upon our system. These will be reserved as the subject of the second report.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

S. R. HOBBIE,

First Assistant Postmaster General.

Hon. CAVE JOHNSON,

Postmaster General.

B.

POST OFFICE, PORTLAND, ME.,

November 25, 1847.

SIR: The enclosed express notice was cut from the Montreal Gazette of 22d inst.

N. L. WOODBURY, P. M.

C.

"Cridge's Boston Express, for conveying letters and packages to the English mail steamer at Boston, will leave Montreal on Saturday morning, November 27, 1847.

"Newspapers, letters, and packages, may be left at Mr. Mackay's book store, 12 St. Francis Xavier street, until 11 o'clock on Saturday forenoon.

"Charge—sixpence per letter; packages in proportion; newspapers, one penny. Unexceptionable security given if required."

D.

Extract from letter from P. M. at Castleton, Vt.

"POST OFFICE, CASTLETON, VT.,

"December 12, 1847.

"I have reason to believe that a person from Montreal passed down on this route from Burlington to Castleton and Albany, with a private mail of letters and packages for the British mail steamer; and, further, that it is the intention of the individual to leave Montreal regular with such a mail. I was in Montreal on the 1st December, and saw notices in all public places that such an express mail would be run, and the prices put for each letter and package."